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THE WOMAN KNOWN AS **ELEKTRA** WAKES FROM A DREAM--

--INTO THE OLD NIGHTMARE.

DEATH BREEDING DEATH BREEDING...

DEAD!

MY FATHER'S DEAD!

AND YOU KILLED HIM!

NO!

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MURDERER!

SHE KNOWS THAT RAGE...

SHE FELT IT HERSELF...

HER OWN FATHER CUT DOWN, SLAUGHTERED..

POLICE.

THIS IS ALL TURNING BAD...

LOOK, I'M... I'M SORRY... I... KNOW HOW...

NO! YOU'RE EVIL!

HE NEVER HURT ANYONE!!

FREEZE!

AGAINST THE WALL!

SHE CLOSES HER EYES.

BUT STILL, SHE SEES IT ALL.

THE BLOOD.

THE DEATH.

THE MADNESS.

HER WORLD.

ELEKTRA ESCAPES INTO ACTION.

REDUCES HER LIFE...

...TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS.

WHO PRIMED HER NEMESIS, HER ASSASSIN BULLSEYE, SO HE KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT HER?

WHO GAVE HIM HER LATE FATHER'S NECKLACE?

WHAT LIES IN HIS APARTMENT?

AND WHAT INELUCTABLE LAW OF PHYSICS OR PSYCHOLOGY...

...MAKES SHOVING YOUR BOOT THROUGH A SOLID DOOR...

WHACK

...SO THERAPEUTIC?

IT'S LIKE WALKING INTO A MUSEUM WHERE SHE'S THE ONLY EXHIBIT. LETTERS. CLOTHES. PHOTOS. IT'S ALL HER STUFF.

NO. IT'S ALL HER LIFE.

HOW DARE THEY RAID HER LIFE LIKE THIS?!

FATHER AND I.

AND THERE'S STAVROS.

IT WAS STAVROS WHO HELPED ME MAKE THIS NECK-LACE, LATER TORN FROM PAPA'S DEAD NECK!

AFTER WHICH I BECAME LIKE ONE OF THE AVENGING FURIES...

...BLOODY...

SHE SENSES THEM BEHIND HER. FOUR AT LEAST...

...WILD-EYED...

...AND VERY DANGEROUS.

BUT HER SAI MOVES THROUGH PHANTOMS...

AND THEIR SAIS DON'T STING.

SHE'S FIGHTING FOUR PERFECT ELEKTRA HOLOGRAMS.

SHE'S FIGHTING HERSELF.

HER LAUGHTER IS MEANT TO BE IRONIC BUT COMES OUT SOMEWHAT CRACKED.

ISN'T THAT WHO ELEKTRA'S ALWAYS FIGHTING?

SHE STARTS TO UNDERSTAND...

YOU ALMOST GOT ME KILLED, SISTERS.

THE REAL DEEP-DOWN SOUL-DEEP ENEMY?

...HOW MONTHS OF TRAINING WITH THESE GHOST-ELEKTRAS GAVE BULLSEYE HIS ABILITY TO READ, TO PREDICT HER EVERY MOVE...

AND THEN...

NO HOLOGRAM THIS TIME.

A MAN IN A MASK AND A CAPE.

THINGS ARE LOOKING UP.

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT FIRE ESCAPES, SHE THINKS.

ELSEWHERE...

HER NAME IS NINA McCABE. SHE IS SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.

SHE CAN STILL SEE THE METAL PIKE PERFORATING HER FATHER'S BODY.

WHERE HAVE YOU *TAKEN* HIM? WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* WITH HIM?

EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY, HONEY!

WE'RE GIVIN' YOU SOMETHING TA MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER!

I DON'T *WANT* TO FEEL BETTER! TAKE THESE THINGS OUT OF MY ARM! I DON'T *WANT* TO FEEL BETTER!

ACROSS TOWN.

THERE'S A PARTY GOING ON INSIDE THE SHABBY HOLE THAT THE MASKED MAN CUTS INTO...

A RAPID SONG THAT ELEKTRA BARELY RECOGNIZES...

SOMETHING ABOUT ... A *FIRESTARTER.*

I SAY! OVER HERE!

WE'VE BEEN *EXPECTING* YOU!

HE TALKS LIKE PRINCE CHARLES.

THE MASKED MAN'S GONE, I'M AFRAID! VANISHED INTO THIN WHATSIT.

BUT THE CHAP BEHIND ALL THIS, *THE ARCHITECT,* IS ON HIS WAY...

LOOK, I'M IN PHYSICAL PAIN, EMOTIONAL TURMOIL, AND A LONG WAY FROM BEING IN TOUCH WITH MY INNER CHILD. SO START MAKING *SENSE!*

WHAT'S AN *ARCHITECT* GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

NOT *AN* ARCHITECT... *THE* ARCHITECT.

OLDER THAN THE ANCIENT ONE, HE HEDGES HIS BETS UNDER A *STARRY FIRMAMENT* OF NAMES...

...THE CENTER OF THE FIRE... LORD OF *TREACHERY* AND *ILLUSIONS*... MASTER OF *SNAKES* AND *LADDERS*...

WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE *TALKING* ABOUT? WHO GAVE BULLSEYE MY FATHER'S NECKLACE? DOES THIS *ARCHITECT* KNOW WHO KILLED MY FATHER?!

HE MAKES US SPEAK NOW. WE ARE HIS LOYAL *PUPPETS*.

THE ARCHITECT IS GATHERING *ASSASSINS*. PYSCHO-KILLERS, RIDERS OF THE DARK WAY, LIKE *BULLSEYE*.

HE CALLS THEM ALL TO NEW YORK TO BATTLE FOR AN HONORABLE PRIZE.

YOU, ELEKTRA, *PROVED* YOURSELF BY DEFEATING *BULLSEYE*...

AND WE GAVE HIM ALL THE HELP WE COULD...

HE IS COMING... THROUGH FIRE DOES HE TRAVEL... IN FIRE WAS HE FASHIONED...

THE SHINING ONE...

THE GLOWING ONE...

AND THE MUSIC PUMPS ON...

FIRESTARTER...

WE WHO ARE ALREADY DEAD...

A SUDDEN STINK OF ASH AND KEBOB.

HE MADE US WAIT FOR YOU...

THE FIRE DOESN'T BEGIN IN ANY ONE PLACE.

HE IS HERE!

RATHER IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THERE, IMPLICITLY, ALL THE TIME...

WAITING.

HIDING.

WATCHING.

LATER, THE STREETS ARE COOL AND DESERTED.

BUT HER MIND IS A HOT, SNARLING GRIDLOCK OF SCREAMS AND FIRES, OF DEAD FATHERS AND GATHERING STORMS.

IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS, SHE WISHES SHE HAD SOMEONE TO TALK TO...

SOMEONE SHE COULD BE OPEN WITH, BE SILLY, WEAK, CHILDISH, AND HONEST TO...

BUT IT WOULDN'T FEEL RIGHT BURDENING THEM.

KING LAU AND MCKINLEY STEWART ARE REAL FRIENDS...

STICK? TOO SEVERE. HE'S A MENTOR, BUT NO FRIEND.

LOGAN? HE HAS ENOUGH ON HIS PLATE...

...MATT MURDOCK...

AH, MATT. THERE WAS A TIME...

...BUT TIME PASSES, AND THINGS CHANGE.

SHE SEES A LIVELY LATE NIGHT BAR, FULL OF LIVELY, LATE NIGHT PEOPLE...

OH. GOD, SHE THINKS. JUST TO WALK IN THERE. ORDER A BEER. FIND A NICE, UNDER-ACHIEVING BOYFRIEND. LAUGH. DANCE.

KARINE'S BAR

FORGET ABOUT DEATH AND DUTY AND REDEMPTION...

...FORGET ABOUT A FIRE-STARTING ARCHITECT.

BUT SHE CANNOT FORGET

AND NOW SHE HESITATES OUTSIDE THE DOJO'S WINDOW.

. AND DOES HER BEST TO HIDE HER WEARINESS..

ELEKTRA! THANK GOD!

ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M FINE

AND BULLS-EYE?

THE MATTER'S BEEN DEALT WITH.

DEALT WITH? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

HE'S OUT OF THE PICTURE NOW. HOW IS THE KID?

SIT DOWN AND WE'LL FIX YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.

I'LL GET SOME HOT WATER TO CLEAN YOUR WOUNDS. BOY, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GONE TWENTY ROUNDS.

RAT? CRITICAL, BUT STABLE BULLSEYE DID A REAL NUMBER ON HIM.

THINK I'LL JUST GO STRAIGHT TO BED. THE WOUNDS WILL MEND THEM-SELVES.

LIAR, SHE THINKS. WHY CAN'T YOU ACCEPT THEIR HELP?

BECAUSE YOU CAN'T LET THEM GET TOO CLOSE, COMES ANOTHER VOICE.

YOU'VE ALREADY ALMOST GOT THEM KILLED.

SHE FEELS HER BODY ABOUT TO GIVE IN

BUT SHE MUST KEEP UPRIGHT

MUST STAY STRONG.

WAKE ME AT FIRST LIGHT.

CHECK OUT THE NEWS. SEE IF THERE WAS A FIRE LAST NIGHT, AT SOME KIND OF PARTY NEAR THE BOWERY.

THAT'S ONLY TWO HOURS AWAY!

WHATEVER THERE'S A GIRL I HAVE TO FIND. I HAVE TO. I HAVE TO HELP HER. ALL THE REST... IT MIGHT BE TOO BIG, TOO FAR OFF...

..BUT.. THE GIRL ..I HAVE TO DO . WHAT I CAN..

..What I can..

Uhhrr...

WHOA!

CATCH HER BEFORE SHE HITS THE GROUND, McKINLEY!

WHY DOES SHE HAVE TO PUT ON THAT SHOW FOR US?

I HAVE A FEELING IT'S AS MUCH FOR HERSELF. WE'LL LET HER SLEEP FOR AS LONG AS SHE NEEDS.

RIGHT. HECK SHE'S SO LIGHT. FEELS LIKE SHE'S GONNA BREAK UP IN MY ARMS.

LATER .

HER FATHER COULDN'T COPE. HE WENT TO PIECES WHEN OUR DAUGHTER, NINA'S MOTHER PASSED AWAY.

LEUKEMIA, YOU KNOW. SHE WAS ONLY FORTY-ONE.

FORTY-TWO, HON. SHE WAS FORTY-TWO.

NINA PRETENDS TO BE SLEEPING..

FORTY-ONE, FORTY-TWO, WHAT DOES IT MATTER?

WE'LL LOOK AFTER NINA NOW. WE'LL BRING HER UP LIKE A DAUGHTER, JUST LIKE WE BROUGHT UP HER MOTHER, BLESS HER SOUL.

NINA.. WHEN YOU FEEL WELL ENOUGH WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ...ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.

WHAT HAPPENED?

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN.

IT'S STILL HAPPENING.

INSIDE HER HEAD, OVER AND OVER AND OVER...

...JUST AS THAT TIME FOUR MONTHS AGO IS STILL HAPPENING..

FATHER TELLING NINA THAT THEY'RE BOTH GOING TO HAVE TO BE STRONG.

MOTHER LOOKING BETTER THAN SHE HAD IN MONTHS.

NOW THE FIGHT WAS OVER.

AND THEN THE SAD, CLICHÉ-RIDDEN FUNERAL.

AND HER FATHER TELLING HER THE MEDICAL BILLS HAD LEFT THEM BROKE

THEY'D HAVE TO MOVE TO NEW YORK, LIVE WITH HER GRAND-PARENTS FOR A WHILE.

THEY MEAN WELL, HER FATHER USED TO SAY..

WE'LL LET YOU KNOW AS SOON AS THE POOR THING'S READY TO TALK, OFFICER

SHE'LL BE BETTER ONCE WE GET HER HOME AND GIVE HER PLENTY OF LOVING.

YEAH SEEING YOUR OWN FATHER KILLED.

POOR KID.

THAT TOO.

WHAT CAN I DO, THINKS ELEKTRA..

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU?

TO STOP YOU FROM TURNING AGAINST THE WORLD AS I DID!

WHAT CAN YA DO?

WHAT I COULD HAVE DONE WAS WALK AWAY FROM THAT FIGHT WITH BULLSEYE...

AN' HE WOULD HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH YA SOONER OR LATER. YER NO MORE TA BLAME FER THE DEATH OF HER FATHER THAN YOU ARE FOR THIS SMOLDERING HEAP.

HOW MANY KIDS DIED IN IT?

THIRTY-THREE AND COUNTING. YOU'RE SURE YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF THE ARCHITECT?

SURE I'M SURE. BUT IF HE'S CLAIMING TO BE OLDER THAN THE ANCIENT ONE, AN' IF HE CAN START FIRES OUTTA NOTHING, LIKE YOU SAID, YOU SHOULD HAVE A WORD WITH DOC STRANGE.

AN' AS FER A BUNCH OF ASSASSINS AND PSYCHO-KILLERS CONVERGING ON THE BIG APPLE...

...WHO'D NOTICE?

RIDE?

UH UH. GOT A HOSPITAL VISIT TO MAKE.

YOU REMEMBER THAT WOULD-BE NINJA GANGSTA I TOLD YOU ABOUT?

RAT...

...I KNOW YOU PROBABLY CAN'T HEAR ME, BUT... WELL...

BEEP BEEP

THIS IS ELEKTRA... THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU THE BIG SPEECH ABOUT TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND..

...WHO'S SO KEEN ON SORTING OUT OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES... BUT SOMETIMES SEEMS TO LOSE A GRIP ON HER OWN...

.. HEY, HOW ABOUT THIS. I'VE GOT SOMEONE I CAN TALK TO AT LAST.

SEEMS THE ONLY REQUIRMENT... IS THAT THE LISTENER BE IN A COMA.

BEEP BEEP

GONE? HOW CAN SHE BE GONE?

JERRY, PHONE THE LAWYER.

HER CLOTHES, HER POSSESSIONS, SHE'S TAKEN THEM ALL.

WHERE'S SHE GONE TO?

JERRY, THE LAWYER

OKAY WITH THE LAWYER, I'M ASKING A QUESTION.

SHE'S IN A VERY DISTURBED STATE OF MIND.

SHE COULD HAVE GONE ANYWHERE.

BEFORE SHE CAME HERE, THE THOUGHT OF NEW YORK SCARED HER.

NOW SHE FEELS INVULNERABLE.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE THAT CAN HURT HER NOW.

OR SO SHE THINKS.

HEY GIRL, YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT.

PRETTY THING LIKE YOU

I'M ANDREW. THIS'S DMITRI.

HELLO

WANNA ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD? WANT SOME FOOD IN YOUR BELLY?

SHE WATCHES TELEVISION. SHE'S EVEN SEEN TAXI DRIVER.

SHE KNOWS THEY'RE SCUM.

IF SHE GOES WITH THEM, SHE MIGHT END UP JUST ANOTHER CRIME STATISTIC.

SURE.

NOTHING TO LOSE.

ELEKTRA TRAWLS THE DARK SIDE OF THE CITY.

WHERE THE LOST THE LONELY THE VULNERABLE EVENTUALLY END UP.

MORE THAN ONCE THE FACE OF A GIRL TRANSMUTES INTO NINA'S...

MORE THAN ONCE ELEKTRA THINKS.

THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD...

KING LAH AND MCKINLEY STEWART CHECK OUT BARS AND CLUBS.

THE CITY HAS NEVER SEEMED SO BIG AND SO FULL OF LOST SOULS.

WHAT CHANCE DOES SHE HAVE OF FINDING THE ONE SHE'S LOOKING FOR?

JUST ONE CHANCE.

HER PAST.

ONE OF THE KINGPIN'S CLUBS

SOME OF THE GUYS STILL LAUGH ABOUT THE TIME YOU TOOK OUT THOSE THREE JAMAICANS OVER IN JERSEY.

YEAH. A REAL SCREAM

SO, YOU GOING TO HELP ME?

YOU WORKED FOR THE KING-PIN ONCE, AND THAT COUNTS FOR SOME THING SURE, I'LL PUT THE WORD OUT

BUT THE BIG MAN WILL BE BACK SOON AND YOU'LL OWE HIM FOR THIS

WHILE SHE WAITS FOR NEWS, SHE CONTINUES HER RESTLESS SEARCH.

AND FINDS HERSELF OUTSIDE THE DANCE THEATER OF KONRAD WEISS.

HEY, YOU! STRANGER! I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW GLAD...

...NO. I TOLD MYSELF I'D REMEMBER TO BE REALLY ANGRY WITH YOU. DISAPPEARING FOR DAYS WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A POSTCARD

SORRY, KONRAD A FEW PERSONAL MATTERS.

WELL, YOU'RE HERE NOW, AND I'M WELL ON THE WAY TO FORGIVING YOU!

I TOOK THE LIBERTY AND...WHAT DO YOU THINK? IDEALIZED GREECE? I MEAN, THE THEATER OF DIONYSUS OR WHAT?

IT'S VERY GOOD.

IT'S WONDERFUL.

VERY GOOD. YOU MEAN.. YOU DON'T LIKE IT?

DRINK THIS. HERBAL. GREAT FOR THE NERVES.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

IT IS, ISN'T IT?

HEY, DO A FEW SPINS FOR ME... JUST SO I KNOW YOUR DANCING WASN'T A WONDERFUL, CRUEL DREAM!

I'M SORRY KONRAD. I DON'T FEEL LIKE DANCING RIGHT

TALK?

OH, NO.

THANKS ANYWAY, KONRAD.

WORD REACHES HER...

SEEMS A COUPLA UKRAINIAN GUYS WITH SOME EX-RUSKIE HARDWARE ARE TRYIN' TO MAKE A NAME FOR THEM-SELVES. DRUGS, PROSTITUTION, PROTECTION. NOTHING NASTY.

YOU MIGHT FIND THEM AT THIS ADDRESS...

THANKS, LARRY.

ONE MORE THING.. HAVE YOU HEARD ANY-THING ABOUT WISE-GUYS--YOU KNOW, HEAVY HITTERS, ASSASSINS-- IN TOWN?

YEAH. RECKON THERE ARE A FEW HEAVYWEIGHTS AROUND.. MAYBE SOMETHING COOKING

NOW GET OUTTA HERE, 'LEKTRA, ELSE PEOPLE WILL START TALKIN' ABOUT US!

HUH HUH HUH...

THIS IS WHY THE KINGPIN OF CRIME HIMSELF EMPLOYED HER AS AN ASSASSIN.

SOON...

THIS IS WHAT SHE'S GOOD AT.

SHE'S REALLY GOOD AT THIS.

HEY, COME ON. WE BEEN GOOD TO YOU. FOOD, CLOTHES, NO FUNNY STUFF. ALL WE WANT IS FOR YOU TO BE NICE TO AN IMPORTANT GENTLEMAN FOR THE EVENING.

LOOK, I WAS REAL CRAZY WHEN YOU MET ME, AND I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE COME ALONG WITH YOU.

I'D LIKE TO GO NOW, PLEASE.

HA HA HA HA HA

AMERICAN GIRLS FUNNY.

HA HA...

WHAT'S... HA HA... WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

NOTHING. THAT'S WHAT'S SO FUNNY. A BIG NOTHING.

NOW YOU START PLAYING BALL, OR WHEN I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU NO GENTLEMEN IN THEIR RIGHT MIND GONNA BE INTERESTED IN YO--

KRRTH

THE ROOM FILLS WITH CORDITE AND DEBRIS.

EVERYTHING GOES CRAZY.

OKAY, BOYS... THINK WE MUSTA GOT WHO-EVER...

AND THEN A COUGH BEHIND THEM...

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...

BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA

YOU'RE WRONG.

WOWZA.

IT'S HER, SHE THINKS...

SHOULD SHE BE RELIEVED?

OR EVEN MORE SCARED?

A BIG PART OF ME WOULD LIKE TO HURT YOU A *LOT*, ANDREW.

BUT INSTEAD, I'M JUST GONNA LEAVE WITH NINA.

I GOTTA MUCH BETTER IDEA.

UGHHN!

I WARNED YOU. WHATEVER IT IS YOU MIGHT THINK ABOUT ME...

...YOU ARE MISTAKEN.

YOU ARE SO MISTAKEN.

YOU! YOU'RE THE ONE!

WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT LATER, NINA. YOU CAN'T STAY HERE.

ALL THAT AWAITS YOU HERE IS PROSTITUTION.

HEY, DON'T KNOCK IT. IN A FEW YEARS YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SET YOURSELF UP.

YOU'LL BE MY SPECIAL GIRL. PLENTY OF MONEY...

YOU AND THAT CRAZY GUY IN THE COSTUME KILLED MY DAD!

THE GUN, SWEETIE... HAND ME THE GUN...

I SAW... YOU BOTH FIGHTING...

...THE FIRE-ESCAPE CAME DOWN ... THE METAL PIKE...

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, NINA.

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT I DO. ALL THE HATRED. ALL THAT BITTERNESS.

YOU WANT TO HURT THE WORLD. YOU WANT TO HURT YOURSELF.

NO! YOU CAN'T KNOW HOW...

EXACTLY HOW I...

...HOW I FEEL...

OH PLEASE, I'M SORRY... I'M SO SORRY.

IT'S OKAY... YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

JUST AS SOON AS WE GET OUT OF HERE.

TO BE CONTINUED!